(b) if so, what are the reasons behind non-procuring of bio-diesel;

(c) whether Government are considering to provide direct financial help to the bio-diesel producer-farmer;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) if not, what are the main reasons in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Public Sector Undertaking, Oil Marketing Companies have not been able to purchase bio-diesel at the idientified purchase centres so far, as the parties who have expressed interest are not willing to supply at the declared price. Facilities are not yet r eady with other parties who have expressed their interest.

(c) to (e) The Ministry of Rural Development has proposed to launch a National Mission on Bio-diesel, which is to be implemented in two phase i.e. Phase-I as Demonstration Project and Phase-II, a self sustaining expansion of Bio-phase Programme. Under the Demonstration phase of the Mission, plantations of Tre Borne Oilseeds (TBOs) like Jatropha and pongamia would be taken up essentially on degraded forest lands and wastelands belonging to the village communitics/panchayats/government. It is not contemplated to involve private land owners/farmers in the mission activities at this stage. Since there is no reliable and tested database on various aspects of jatropha cultivation and costs and returns involved, Research & Development (applicable to both planting and processing), would also be an important and significant component of the Demonstration Phase.

Co-operation with US in oil sector

2981. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Washington has offered New Delhi a role in its efforts at framing a response to the volatility in the global oil and gas market, and also pushing for upscaling Government framework for co-operation in coal sector;

(b) whether the US Energy Secretary has sought India's partnership in its efforts to study and analyse the present situation in the global oil and gas markets in the light of growing world demand; and

(c) if so, to what extent Government have agreed to accept the offer by the US?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Department of Energy, United States of America (USA) has sought India's participation in the Committee on Global Oil and Gas constituted by National Petroleum Council to advise the Secretary of Energy, USA on oil and natural gas matters. While the primary focus is oil and natural gas, the study will also examine other energy source (e.g. coal, nuclear and alternative fuels) and environmental issues. The proposal is under consideration of the Government.

Besides the above, the Indo-US Coal Working Group is actively pursuing various areas of cooperation in the Coal Sector.

Shortage of oil and gas

2982. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHARTIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether crude oil and natural gas production in the country over the last four years of the current Five year Plan has been almost stagnant;

(b) whether the crude oil production during the period stood at around 33 million metric tonne, while gas production as about 31-32 billion cubic meters;

(c) whether the reason for this static oil and gas production includes the natural declilne in the ageing field producing fuels; and

(d) if so, the steps Government proposed to take to meet the shortage of crude oil and natural gas in the country.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Crude Oil production